

CLAIMS

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1. A method for determining potential licensees for a source patent portfolio composed of one or more patents where each patent has one or more references cited thereto, the method comprising:

5 devising a set of associated patents wherein each patent in the set i) cites as a reference a patent in the source patent portfolio or ii) is cited as reference by a patent in the source patent portfolio;

 processing all of the patents in the set of associated patents to determine the assignees contained in the set;

 removing from the assignees all assignees that are currently licensed; and
 organizing the remaining assignees according to a ranking criteria.

2. A method as recited in claim 1 further comprising:

 adding, to the set of associated patents, patents that cite as a reference patents in the original set of associated patents or patents that are cited as a reference by a patent in the original set of associated patents.

3. A method as recited in claim 1 further comprising:

 determining a set of cited references contained in the patents of the source patent portfolio;

 adding, to the set of associated patents, patents that contain at least one of

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4. A method as recited in claim 1 wherein the source patent portfolio is the set of all patents assigned to a particular assignee.

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presenting the organized assignees in an HTML document that can be read by an Internet browser.

6. A method as recited in claim 1 wherein the ranking criteria is the frequency of occurrence for each assignee in the set of associated patents.

A3 7. A method as recited in claim 1 wherein the ranking criteria is expressed as a ratio of the total number of patents held by an assignee to the number of patents meeting the criteria for the assignee in the set of correlated patents.

8. A method as recited in claim 1 wherein the ranking criteria gives more weight to assignees having patents that have commonly cited references with patents in the source patent portfolio.

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9. A method as recited in claim 1 wherein the ranking criteria gives more weight

to assignees both i) having patents that have a reference to a patent in the source patent portfolio and ii) having patents that are cited as a reference by a patent in the source patent portfolio.

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10. A computer program product comprising:

a computer usable medium;

computer readable instructions embodied on said computer useable medium for determining potential licensees for a source patent portfolio composed of one or more patents where each patent has one or more references cited thereto, the instructions directing a computer to perform the steps of:

devising a set of associated patents wherein each patent in the set i) cites as a reference a patent in the source patent portfolio or ii) is cited as reference by a patent in the source patent portfolio;

processing all of the patents in the set of associated patents to determine the assignees contained in the set;

removing from the assignees all assignees that are currently licensed; and

organizing the remaining assignees according to a ranking criteria.

11. A computer program product as recited in claim 10 further comprising the instructions directing a computer to perform the steps of:

adding, to the set of associated patents, patents that cite as a reference patents in the original set of associated patents or patents that are cited as a reference by a patent in the original set of associated patents.

12. A computer program product as recited in claim 10 further comprising the instructions directing a computer to perform the steps of:

determining a set of cited references contained in the patents of the source patent portfolio;

adding, to the set of associated patents, patents that contain at least one of the references found in the set of cited references.

13. A computer program product as recited in claim 10 wherein the source patent portfolio is the set of all patents assigned to a particular assignee.

14. A computer program product as recited in claim 10 further comprising the instructions directing a computer to perform the steps of:

presenting the organized assignees in an HTML document that can be read by an Internet browser.

15. A computer program product as recited in claim 10 wherein the ranking criteria is the frequency of occurrence for each assignee in the set of associated patents.

Sub 15 16. A computer program product as recited in claim 10 wherein the ranking criteria is expressed as a ratio of the total number of patents held by an assignee to the number of patents meeting the criteria for the assignee in the set of correlated patents.

17. A computer program product as recited in claim 10 wherein the ranking criteria gives more weight to assignees having patents that have commonly cited references with patents in the source patent portfolio.

5 18. A computer program product as recited in claim 10 wherein the ranking criteria gives more weight to assignees both i) having patents that have a reference to a patent in the source patent portfolio and ii) having patents that are cited as a reference by a patent in the source patent portfolio.

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A6 19. A system for determining potential licensees for a source patent portfolio composed of one or more patents where each patent has one or more references cited thereto, the system comprising:

5 means for devising a set of associated patents wherein each patent in the set i) cites as a reference a patent in the source patent portfolio or ii) is cited as reference by a patent in the source patent portfolio;

means for processing all of the patents in the set of associated patents to determine the assignees contained in the set;

10 means for removing from the assignees all assignees that are currently licensed; and

means for organizing the remaining assignees according to a ranking criteria.

20. A system as recited in claim 19 further comprising:

means for adding, to the set of associated patents, patents that cite as a reference patents in the original set of associated patents or patents that are cited as a reference by a patent in the original set of associated patents.

21. A system as recited in claim 19 further comprising:

20 means for determining a set of cited references contained in the patents of the source patent portfolio;

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means for adding, to the set of associated patents, patents that contain at least one of the references found in the set of cited references.

22. A system as recited in claim 19 wherein the source patent portfolio is the set of all patents assigned to a particular assignee.

23. A system as recited in claim 19 further comprising:

means for presenting the organized assignees in an HTML document that can be read by an Internet browser.

24. A system as recited in claim 19 wherein the ranking criteria is the frequency of occurrence for each assignee in the set of associated patents.

Sub A7 25. A system as recited in claim 19 wherein the ranking criteria is expressed as a ratio of the total number of patents held by an assignee to the number of patents meeting the criteria for the assignee in the set of correlated patents.

26. A system as recited in claim 19 wherein the ranking criteria gives more weight to assignees having patents that have commonly cited references with patents in the source patent portfolio.

27. A system as recited in claim 19 wherein the ranking criteria gives more weight to assignees both i) having patents that have a reference to a patent in the source patent portfolio and ii) having patents that are cited as a reference by a patent in the source patent portfolio.